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505 FIFTH AVENUE. N. Y. 17. N. Y.
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NEWSLETTER SERVICES

Sept 28,1953 Vol VI No 4. $10 year 3 Years $25. NYC Weekly Theatre NewsletterLY9-2826

New York Theatre Diary

The Strong Are Lonely- Broadhurst 9/29/53. Walter P Chrysler,Jr presents Fritz Hochwalder's play. Script adapted by Eva Le Gallienne, directed by Margaret Webster. Cast includes Victor Francan,French star, Dennis King and Philip Bourneuf. Unusual subject matter concerns events in an 18th century Paraguayan Jesuit colony...Tea and Sympathy- Barrymore- 9/30/53. Playwrights Company presents Robert Anderson's drama about a boy's school. Elia Kazan directed cast headed by Deborah Kerr, John Kerr and Leif Erickson...Concert in Comedy- Golden 10/2/53. Victor Borge"one man" show.The comedian-pianist NY theatre debut.

Current Theatre Reviews

Take a Giant Step-Lyceum 9/24/53.Majority of NY daily critics welcomed Louis Peterson's warm hearted story of an adolescent Negro in a New England town. Though most admitted the play as uneven, they agreed that the fine acting by a large Negro cast plus the truthfulness of the characters and situations portrayed made for an interesting and worthwhile first play. Louis Gossett, a 17 year old newcomer,won rave notices, while every other member of the cast merited praise. Chapman,News, and Kerr,Herald Tribune, were the dissenters. The former couldn't give his approval because he felt that the author did not know when to stop a scene or when to discard one. While the latter blamed the playwright for writing of too familiar subjects at a lagging pace. A fresh,moving drama,both honest and humorous,summed up Atkinson, Times. Watts,Post, okayed it for its direct and honest simplicity which makes it very real and touching. Warmth and emotional impact in a well acted script,added McClain, Journal American. Sheaffer, Eagle, joined the "pro" side, but did wish the author had spent more time. Critic believes the author over-extended himself in trying to move from the problem of the Negro youth to the problems of all youth.Estelle Hemsley as the Grandmother and Fred O'Neal as the Father came in for extra cheers from all. Lyn Austin and Thomas Noyes, two new producers, were credited with a fine first play,while Eldon Elder's imaginative and quick changing sets were applauded.

At Home With Ethel Waters- 48th St Theatre 9/22/53. No critic in his right mind would argue that the Negro actress-singer is not one of the theatre's greats. While most of the NY aisle-sitters were thoroughly enchanted with the 22 numbers presented in a handsome living room set designed by Oliver Smith and accompanied by Reginald Beane, Atkinson,Times, Watts,Post and Cooke, Wall St Journal would have enjoyed her more as part of a full show, not a "one woman" recital. Several of the "pro" men did note that the star's voice was low. But Kerr, Herald Tribune,noted this as merely a quibble about a majestic,endearing and often thrilling personality.Coleman, Mirror,believes the show lacks dull-spots thanks to its summer tryouts.

Out of Town Tryouts

The Little Hut, which opens in NY Oct 7,is a sure Broadway hit,predicts Elie, Variety, from its Boston tryout. Comedy about 3 tramped on a desert isle in evening clothes is a brillant tour de force of repartee with perfect casting to aid.

Village Theatre

End As A Man ,which won fine notices moving to uptown Vanderbilt Oct 14...Next tenants of Theatre de Lys will be Miranda d' Ancona and Audrey Hilliard, who will produce a series of 5 plays starting Oct 19. Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle will open the program, to be follow ed by Back to Methuselah, Moon in Capicorn,a new play by James Leo Herlihy, Prophesy to the Wing, a poetic drama by Norman Nicholson, and A Tragedy of Love , a Norwegian drama by Gunnar Heiberg.

The Heiress,now being produced weekends at the Green Room Studio on Bleeker St, okayed by Morehouse, WT&S. Georgia Hess was called remarkably effective.

Off Broadway

World of Sholom Aleichem will remain at Barbizon Plaza for an indefinite run. ...Late Arrival, Charles Oxton's play which opens at Blackfriars Theatre Oct 19 features Mary Berkley, John Williams,Al Mifelow and Shelia Fallon...Lew Vonharden version of the 16th century play The Tragedy of Mr Arden of Feversham will be presented by the Caravan Theatre Nov 23... Climate of Eden opens at Current Stages, 1129 6th Ave, Oct 6...Equity Library has cancelled The Goat Song as its 2nd production due to illness of director Ray Hinkley.

Vaudeville

Betty Hutton will play 9 performances per week at the Palace starting Oct 14. First half of bill will feature Los Chavales de Espana(The Kids from Spain) and Trini Reyes. Reserved seats are now on sale with prices ranging from $6-$1.20

Current Palace show features Dusty Fletcher,Dean Allen,Honey Girls and Kim Yen Soo troupe...New Radio City Music Hall show is "Million Dollar Look" with Chiquita & Johnson,Lillian Murphy and Jeannette Tannan.

Theatre Record Comments

Macbeth (RCA Victor) as performed by the Old Vic with an all star cast headed by Alec Guinness and Pamela Brown rated as outstanding by Rolontz,Billboard. The entire production-crowd sounds,musical entrances,etc,-is perfect. Record was recommended for students and actors.

The Showtime Series(RCA Victor) an album of 8 ten inch LPs containing 4 songs from each of 16 hit musicals of the past won a mild notice from Wilson, Times. Though all tunes are done nicely enough,but only Hiram Sherman's "When Yuba Plays the Rhumba on His Tuba" from The Third Little Show was outstanding.

Theatre Book Comments

"Chekhof: A Life" by David Magarshack(Grove) recommended by Spector, Saturday Review, as a fresh interpretion of the career of the Russian physician whose avocation was literature.

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Green Room Department

REVIEWER'S ADVICE...Taking exception with a "CD" evaluation of his review of A Pin to See the Peepshow as a "mild" pro notice, Watts, Post, advised young drama critics never to say anything at all kind about a play they dislike, lest someone think they are giving it a rave. Apparently, the critic noted, he doesn't always write with sufficient clarity.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Quality, or at least a recognizable gesture at quality, pays off in the musical show department, points out Nathan, Journal American...Training in acting may be hard to come by for the student who wishes to be an actor, but voice training is available to anyone who wants it and who has sense enough to avoid the charlatans scattered among legitimate voice teachers, lectures Burr, Playbill...Gwen Verdon, Can-Can, is still the brightest young performer in NY theatre, praises Morehouse, World Telegram & Sun.

TICKET CODE DISPUTE...Expenditures of the NY Ticket Code Enforcement Authority has been criticized by a League of NY Theatres official, reports Zolotow, Times. Arthur Schwartz is charged with exceeding his authority in permitting excessive disbursements. Diverse arguments of producers state that either the public had saved a great deal of money by the industry's enforcement, or that the group has made little headway. The agreement between the authority and the NY Ticket Brokers Association expired August 31 and has not been renewed yet.

COLUMN TIPS...A female "angel" gave $4000 to keep Red Rainbow going a second week, reveals Winchell, Mirror. While Farrell, WT&S, adds that anti-communist writers were sent free tickets to the show claiming " a deliberate attempt to sabotage and close the show was launched by the drama critics."...Unless a Broadway star stops drinking during the show, the bar next door will close its private entrance, warns Wilson, Post

NEW "PLAY" BOYS...Broadway is bustin' out all over with independently wealthy legit producers, who unlike past crops, are taking the production end of the theatre very seriously, surveys Hobe, Variety. Walter Chrysler, Jr, Anthony Farrell, Michael Grace, Edward Hambleton, Roger Stevens are a few of the present candidates.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Broadway stars average $5 [illegible] tip to stage doormen, while bit players average $1 per week, Jack Warren, Plymouth Theatre, told YMCA Maxine Keith. This money is needed to make up the difference in the low salary paid for a 48 hour work week...The individuality of every actor must remain intact in presenting believable people on stage, Jack Garfein, director of End As A Man, told Hawkins, WT&S. He firmly believes that if the actor works hard enough he will be recognized.

Pros & Cons by TMK

Take A Giant Step is a first rate blend of superb acting by a talented Negro cast and a universal prejudice problem detailed in a humane, humorous manner by a talented new playwright. Though the problem is universal, the pin-pointing it at a Negro family in New England makes for an interesting, stimulating theatre evening.

Two Off Broadway groups made important decisions this week. World of Sholom Aleichem elected to stay at the comfortable Barbizon Plaza, while End As A Man decided to forsake the comfortable Theatre de Lys for the musty Vanderbilt. Thus in this crazy industry called show business, the fan who sees End As A Man uptown will pay more money for a less comfortable seat. You figure it out.

NYC Theatre News Round-Up

Broadway theatre fans may have a chance to help pick the three productions Jose Ferrer will present at the NY City Center, but the cynics doubt it. Several thousand regular subscribers to the City Center programs are being asked via mail which of three out of eight plays they would like the producer-director-actor to present. The series, whose opening date has been pushed up from December 11 to November 13, will run from six to eight weeks depending upon the demand.

Shows which Ferrer offered the public for choice include Cyrano de Bergerac, The Shrike, The Silver Whistle, Charley's Aunt, 20th Century, The Insect Comedy, Chekhov One Act Plays and Richard III. He has appeared in all but the last named on Broadway. The reason why some doubt that the poll of the fans will make any difference in the final selection is that Ferrer had previously informed several drama reporters, via long distance phone from Los Angeles, that his program would consist of Cyrano de Bergerac, The Shrike and Charley's Aunt.

Plays

Kind Sir holds its world premiere Oct 3 in New Orleans, the cast is en route to that city now...New Haven Railroad's first Show Train of the new season attended 7 Year Itch Sept 25...Victor Borge may think he is giving a "one man" show this week, but the Musicians Union has 4 paid hands backstage...The Solid Gold Cadillac, George Kaufman's new comedy, will use filmed sequences and recorded narration between scenes. Fred Allen has recorded the commentary to be used...Daphne, Thaddeus Suski's new comedy which was to have opened in NY Sept 20 folded in Boston...Red Rainbow closed in NY after 16 performances. Show got unanimous panning.

People

Margaret Truman will be co-chairman of the "Gilbert & Sullivan Ball" for the benefit of ANTA to be presented Oct 27 at the Plaza Hotel...Maxine Sullivan dropped out of the cast of Take A Giant Step one week before show's NY debut, Dorothy Carter replaced her...Major cast change in "Strong Are Lonely" with Wesley Addy replacing George Mitchell, while Scott McKay is replacing Mark Miller in Sabrina Fair...NY Drama Critics Circle meets Oct 1 to elect officers. Shipley, New Leader, will probably be re-elected president.

Theatre Book Notes

"Ladies First", by W. MacQueen Pope has been published by British Book Centre. It is the story of one woman's conquest of the English stage. Random House has published the lyrics and text of "Wonderful Town."

Theatre Obits

Percival Wilde, playwright, died at University Hospital, at age 66. Author of many plays including The Woman in Room 13, First Is Last and Crooked Gamblers, he is credited with having more of his plays produced in American "Little Theatres" than any other playwright...Robert Hague, former drama critic of Newspaper PM, died at James Ewing Hospital, at age 49...Orlando Weber, Jr, who played in summer stock companies under the name of Kevin Kemple, was found dead in his bed in his NY Park Avenue apartment. Police believe it may have been due to a possible overdose of barbiturates. He was 31...Mrs. Samuel Insull, widow of the famous utility head whose stage name was Gladys Wallis, died in Chicago's St. Luke's Hospital at age 80. She was known as the best looking ingenue on any Chicago stage in the 1890's.